

YZ: Hi. My name is Yumo Zhu. And I also go by Angel. Do you want to introduce yourself really quick?

PW: Yes. Hi, my name is Paw. And yea...I go by Paw [laugh].

YZ: Awesome! So, I am a first-year history student at UCSD. So today is May 12th, and right now, it is 1 o'clock. I am doing an interview with Paw, who is from the Karen organization, to learn more about who she is, her identity, stories, and culture. Okay, before the interview starts, were you able to get a chance to look at the release form that I sent to you?

PW: Yeah.

YZ: Okay, cool. So, the interview will be recorded and uploaded to Race and Oral History website for the interests of preserving more oral histories in archived forms. Are you okay with that?

PW: Yeah.

YZ: Sweet. So, if you don't feel comfortable during this conversation or talking about anything, please let me know. We can also like pause it or take a break. I will also send you the transcript afterwards when I am done and a copy of the interview later. So...do you have any questions or concerns before we start the interview?

PW: No. I will just email you the consent form after too. I haven't signed it yet.

YZ: Okay, awesome! okay, let's start it?

PW: Yeah.

YZ: Yea, starting off, this is kinda a basic interview question, but it helps us to learn more about you. So, could you tell me a little bit more about yourself?

PW: Yea. My name is Paw, and I am a recent graduate from UCSD. I just finished this winter quarter with a bachelor in global health and a minor in biology. And I am currently working at the Karen Organization of San Diego as a tutoring assistance, helping out with the after school kids program. And I am a first-generation college student. And I am...yea and I am from the Karen communities. One of the Karen is one of our largest ethnicities from Burma. So, my families are from Burma. Because of the war, they resettled in Thailand Refugee camp. And that's where I was born, and then, in 2008, I came into the United States. And ever since that, I have been living here.

YZ: Wow. First off, I just want to say congratulations. It was... I also go to UCSD. This is awesome! So, you've mentioned that you have attended to UCSD before. In your experience, in your own way, how do you think the school do in terms of diversity and inclusion from your perspective and experience?

PW: I mean...I did go to UCSD. I do see some type of diversity. But I would say... I would say I see a lot of Asian Americans there. There's a lot of other cultures and other ethnicities too, but the majority that I saw there's a majority of Caucasians or Asian Americans. But I don't really, for me myself, my parents were naturalized. They become a citizenship under the naturalization. So, then, I don't know...I am still confused about my identity. Basically, I don't know if I am...This might be a naturalized citizenship of the U.S.. Like I think I consider myself to be more a Karen. So, I don't really identify myself much with the Asian American community at UCSD either. So I feel like there is some kind of diversity, but to me, I don't necessarily fit into the...I don't feel like I fit into these categories as being a Karen and refugees. Yea.

YZ: Wow. That's kinda... really interesting to hear. And also I definitely understand it's how you identify yourself, and it's totally okay! Considering your culture and identity, I was going to ask, would you...what would you say is the biggest challenge growing up?

PW: Growing up, I think...Ok, like when I was younger, I don't really see the challenge. Growing up in a refugee camp, I can't really...I don't... I think for others, it might seem like a challenge, but to me, it wasn't a challenge because like I don't have anything else to compare to. Basically every kids, that grew up with me, are at my age. We are all like growing up, going to school together. We have the same...We received the same kind of resources, so there is no...there is no differences for me to see to understand that "Oh, my life is either worse or better than another person" because there is nothing better to compare to. So, I don't really feel like it was a challenge. But I would say that, to me, I've definitely seen a challenge when I came into the United States. Because from not seeing anything that is like...to be compared to, coming to the United States, I can say that there's basically a big gap between me and another person or basically my peers and stuff due to a lot of things. Like language barrier, the way I looks, and any other thing that...Because I...when I first came, I was settled in Virginia, where the majority of my classmates are...I guess...people that doesn't quite look like me. I think there's only another...In my whole classroom, there is only one other asian person. And then I was just...So, yea, that was the first school that I attended was in Virginia. It was an elementary school in Virginia. So, that's quite challenge because it's really hard for me to make friends. I mean, i think, for a lot of people who just came to the United States probably a common challenge as the language barrier. But for me, it was like...yea, that was the challenge to not be able to make friends. I was like just staying on my own kind of circle. And I didn't like really speak to anyone, or like make any friends until like three years later. But I did like...I am

grateful for the ESL teacher that i had that teaches me English and other...yea...but I think it was challenge being a kid. And being a kid I think kids that... to be a kid is like enjoys to hang out with other people and find communities and friends. And be freedom to be expressive. For me, that was a challenge cause I don't know how to express myself in English or like to be...yea, language barrier, but also what I find challenge is also for that...because I was also so young but then my parents also didn't know how to speak english. So, a lot of time, I would help to like...try to like act more mature than my age to adult up to be able to help my family with other translations like if they go to see a doctor or they go to a...get help at any social services things they got. They have an expectation like for me to be able to read some of the documents that they file. So, for me, it's also hard it was also challenge to be able to balance between like be a kid who enjoy my childhood but also be a grown up...I guess helpful to my parents who doesn't know the language at all.

YZ: Yea, for sure. The language barrier. Totally feel you. I remember when I first came to the States, my English was also kinda broken. And I was in an ESL class too for like a year to learn English. Like how to speak, read, and write. And my school was also predominantly white. So, it was really difficult for me to blend in, and I also had a lot of time just being there by myself, and then couldn't really find a place to kind of like...I don't know...make friends or be vocal cause...yea, just like you said, a lot of people didn't look like me at the time. And then I kinda feel like : “ Oh, I might don't belong here.” or something like that. But hey, look at you right now! You have come this long way! I am so proud of you! So, you've mentioned about your experience growing up in a refugee camp. Like do you...you said like something about your friends and a lot of your childhood. I was just wondering do you still remember more about that experience?

PW: Yes. I would say that growing up my childhood memories from Thailand even though there's like...there's...to other people it may seem like a challenge. I would say that's one of my most precious memories. I think because of the...I remember like in Thailand, we like basically I go to school. I go to school but not like an 8 hour a day like America. It was like...I go to school like maybe 4 hours a day. Yea, I go to school like 4 hours a day, and the rest of the day, we'll be me playing with my other friends from school. So, we go to school in the morning and at like lunchtime we all pack our lunch bag to school and then what we do after school is that we'll...there's a mountain nearby. So, we will go hike there and then go hike to the mountains and have a little picnic and where we also we'll get some vegetables and stuff from the wild. And that was good memories. And after school, I remember like we'll just be playing with marbles. We'll make our own toys. Go play with kids and stuff. But...yea, make our own toys and plays and play with it. Or play with rubber bands. Jumping rope. Make a rubber band into a jumping rope, and we play that. So, like make our own marbles, and things like that. And it was...it was...I think I really like those memories because like they really teaches me to like basically make I guess like use everything that I have to be able to make something...to use i

guess nonuse recycle materials to be able to make something that is useful. We'll make cards and stuff out of the materials that we saw from the street. So none of ...because our parents...refugee camp, there's no store that sell toys or anything so. Everyday we play with this. It's the thing that we made, and it really teaches us like the creativity when we were little, and I feel like those are what I values from my childhood to be able to...yea... just see what you have and make the use out of those thing

YZ: That is a really positive mindset! I really appreciate that you like sharing your stories. And like at the time, I bet it was really difficult but still kinda of like trying to enjoy the time and using the best use of it. Wow, you guys were amazing! Were you...are you still able to keep in touch with your childhood friends? For any...

PW: Yea. Sorry, let me charge the computer and turn it back. I am so sorry.

YZ: No. No worries.

PW: But yes. So like the childhood friends that I had was also the childhood friends that I go to school with but also the people that I go to church with. So, I meet them at school and I also meet them at church. I also meet them after school because we were all like neighbors kind of. Yea, in refugees camp, we are like very small communities. So, like, I would...every of our neighbors were like older we will call them like...we will address them as an older sister or like people who are younger, we will address them as younger brothers and sisters. Every neighbor is like your parents' friends or every neighbor at your parents' age, you would just call them aunts and uncles. So, we are all like really close community. And then what I like about the Karean organization there is that...or in general is like Karen people are very hospitable. So, if you go to someone's house like or visit someone's house, you always have to stay there for dinner or lunch [laugh]. Yea and...so that makes us like a really close community. So, a lot of like even like people that are my parents' friend...my parents still have connections with them to this day. And their kids are at my age, so I still have a connection with them like a lot of them like we...either saw them like when we visit another state like reunited with them or through social media like facebook and social media like my parents this still. They always talk to their friends on facebook to reconnect and see what's going on in their lives, and once in a while I will also my friends will like reconnect with me through facebook as well. And some of them are like when they have a big event or stuff like a wedding or stuff, they send me invitations to go in. So, still, yea a majority of them, I am still friends with them on facebook and connect with them. But also I came here when I was like ten eleven, so a lot of time I don't really remember people well. So, like a lot of time it takes me when they are like: "Do you remember me?", it takes me a longer time to like remember, but some of them I don't still remember them, but they still remember me. So but most majority of my neighbors were still connected into these days.

YZ: That's so sweet! Yea, i definitely feel that cause cause when you guys came to Campus last Saturday, i could tell like it was more like a family cause everyone knows each other. And a lot of them like a lot of the youths they are friends with each other. They are like super close, and that's that's really nice. And it's also good to hear that you still like you are still like connecting with your childhood friends and then kind of like keeping that connection still like alive like until today. Yea.

PW: Yea. Even the Karen community like Karen like in San Diego...if you ask another Karen person if you know this person, they are most likely to know like I am sure like a Karen person in San Diego is knowing another Karen person because there's like a tied community...yea where we go.

YZ: Wow, that's amazing. Kinda of like...this kind of question ties in to the last question. So, have you ever talked to your parents about like the experience of being in the refugee camp? Or how do you feel like in your perception, how does this experience kinda impact you and your family kinda like growing up or just for your parents...

PW: Yea. I mean I do ask my parents. So, my parents like they...I asked them like how...i mean, growing up I also see from myself that actually that my dad is he teaches in the Thailand refugee camp. He teach math, and my mother is like a she helps out with farming and other stuff. So, I think for them being an adult, they have a lot more responsibility on them to be able to raise their family and other things though. It was...I mean i know that is difficult for them, for example, they my parents have probably if you count their...back in the day right, when my dad teach in Thailand, he would make around 500 bucks a month, which is like now is what...20 around 20 U.S dollar a month. So, that was like a...and my mother would make like maybe...like maybe 100 a day, which is like...but that was just like...but bascially in refugees camp, you don't really...there's not a lot of work opportunities from like my parents because you are in the refugees camp so you will not consider either Thai citizen or citizen of Burma. We are just people who doesn't really have any status in terms of citizenship to any country. So, my parents couldn't really leave the refugee camp to go work to go like into the city in Thailand to find a better work opportunity because if the Thai police call you leaving the refugee camp without like the res...the work permit, you will get fines or you will go to jail. So, my family didn't wanna risk that either. So, what they do was they look for what is available in refugees camp and work. But then without that amount of money, it's like...the daily money you make is basically to survive each day. So, you don't make money to save or you make what's enough to survive each day. Like if my parents made 100 that day, that would be our whole day dinner and lunch. So, there's not a lot...So, I'm sure it's was very difficult because then a lot of time for us is to...we have...For me especially, like being the youngest one, I feel like i always have a lot of these are: "Oh, I want this. Like I want extra snacks. I want other things." which I don't really at the time really think of my parents' burden, but because of that I said earlier, i don't really see like for me

as a challenge growing up because I was too young and then didn't have a lot of responsibilities. But I know my parents always tell me that...to them there's like a lot of responsibility for them. So, then that really...I guess...yea...they do have a lot more responsibility and challenges compare to me growing up. And it's not just my parents like like I said it's just we don't have anything to compare to either because everyone all of our neighbors they are basically doing the same thing as us what they are doing. So, despite being a challenge like they are, I guess any other parents went every parents they are doing every well of me for their family and their child. Yea...I am not sure if I answered your question. I think you asked something else.

YZ: No. It definitely did! It's also really...I don't know. Thinking about how much parents can do for their children always kind of like moves me. You were...I do have one quick question. You were mentioning about there wasn't a lot of stores at refugee camps, and you were also talking about people can't really go out that often because of the money or the permit issue. So, how do you guys like usually get food? Or any living necessities?

PW: Okay. So, yea I mean a lot of the people doesn't have the work permit, but there are a few people that does have a work permit. But those things cost a lot of money so for those people who have those work permit, it's usually that they borrow like a large amount of money from someone to be able to make the work permit. Because if you have the work permit, you are able to go into the city to work and buy stuff and come back selling in the refugees camp. But there are some like mini grocery store like where people sell snacks, veggies that they grow themselves so like...and then once once a week like, early morning like 5- 6 am. The Thai people from the city will come down to the refugees camp to basically have a farmer's market. That's where they get...you get your fresh like fish deli. They come and sell catfish and now there's chicken and meats deli...yea that's what where they come once a week to sell the veggies and at that time, a lot of people would just...like people who own the store or people who are just like want to seek for a cheaper price than a wholesale price will go and buy it. And also a lot of people like my family too, we raise our own chicken and pigs and other animals. So, then, once in a while, my parents will also slaughter I guess the animals that they raise, and they go sell it to the neighborhoods. So, that's another way that people I guess make money or have food to eat. Is that you raise your own things that you need like farm your own vegetable, raise your own animal stocks, and share with your neighbor or exchange for something or exchange it with money. Yea, but yea I am not sure if also you are asking the question that you are asking me earlier if you want to know also about if my parents have also shared any experience with me like them fleeing the war or anything like that.

YZ: Yea, if you could talk more about that, that would be awesome.

PW: yea yea I am mostly gonna talk about the refugee camps. Their refugee camp experience, but yea my parents...they...so...there's a civil war between...in Burma between like Burmese

and a different ethnicity, but especially with the Karens, it's been going on for a long time. I think it's 80 years now. But...so it's because in Burma, I think from what I hear from my parents is that they want...there's a lot of fights like basically there's some history that I don't really know to what of but they want to basically pure Burmese, so anyone that is not of Burmese ethnicity, they will kick them out of or in have like some violence to kick them out of country. And this is not just with the Karen people, it's also with any other ethnicity. So, my parents are from Karen ethnicity. So, with the Karen ethnicity, there's like a long war going on with political view differences with like internal conflicts with like war, lands, and basically yea...other stuff, but my parents yea they fled from Burma since they were young until they reached refugee camp. I think my family stay in the refugee camp for a long time around 30 years? No, no no. Not 30 years. Um...remember...yea maybe around 25 years. And then they came to...they came to the United States. My dad...my dad shares with me that when they ran away from the war, they see a lot of violence like they see there's people getting shot and killed in front of them. And that even for like they see like images like that are pretty disturbing not that they share with me, I can't imagine that happening. But they said it's the reality that they use men to like they say like carry weapons and stuff for them and enslave them. And for the women that are pregnant, they are like...they will like rape women and stuff. Womens are pregnant like they will also like basically have an... assault them in front of their husbands and other things like that. Those are very disturbing images that I thought will only happens in the...you know like I've heard of those in other countries during the colonial time, but I didn't know that it will actually happens to like in non-colonial time. It's just two different ethnicities from the same country like fighting against one another, and they will still use that kind of violence to one another despite I guess coming from the same country.

YZ: Wow. I am so sorry for your dad's experience and also for your family. It must be really hard. Like I can't imagine if it's either seeing that kind of things like disturbing things, and how I would react to it. But...yea...I am so sorry. Oh sorry. Go ahead. Were you saying anything?

PW: Oh yea. I was saying that I mean I am sure like for my parents like sharing their experiences there's a lot worse for them. For me like, I am grateful for that. I will like I was I guess at least I didn't experience that, but thinking about their experience like my grandparent generation's experience, I am just thinking like...yea how do they like I guess it is like by the grace of God like that's what they always say. Survive those things it was to, and I have been in refugee camps, which is to other people they may seem like a jail. I mean it is, but at least it's like a place of safety for them that's better than keep have to running away.

YZ: Yea, kinda of like a safer environment compared to the old environments. But, yea, you've mentioned that in the refugee camps, you were raising chickens and pigs. Was that part of your childhood chores? Like would your parents go tell you and like: " Oh, you have to feed the chicken right now." Or something like that?

PW: [laugh] I wasn't...So, basically my mother would cook a pigs of food in the morning, and I have to in and like feed the pigs with them, and then for the chicken, I just go on and spread rice and stuff for them. That's like for me. They didn't really make that like a chore for me, but I just do it like mostly my mother would take care of things on her own, but I just do it when I guess I want to do it once in a while [laugh]. But per...again I guess for me I was kind of sad when I see like the chicken that...the chicken or the pigs that I grew up with one day just like are missing one by one [laugh]. But I think for, I guess yea that's what they have to do to survive or to be able to make money. So, then they would do that and then...I think they yea like for...I was really sad when I see like a they basically slaughter the pigs that I see them growing up for so many years [laugh]. Yea...

YZ: Yea...have you ever asked your parents about that? Have you ever asked them like: "Oh, have you ever seen the pig that I grew up with kinda missing right now?" Or something like that?

PW: [Laugh] yea yea. I think they the sad thing is that they would actually slaughter those things like a turning in to like a big event like my brother and my birthday. And then they have a like inviting people over to church to stuff, they would do those things for those big events. So like they would sell them as a whole, and someone would slaughter them, but I think they don't...they don't really care [laugh] the animals that they raise so that we can eat them.

YZ: Yea. I feel like at that time it's more about survival and how to live and how to take care of their children and stuff like that. Yea...Oh yea, kind of going off...going into that direction, after refugee camp, do you remember anything? Was it difficult to obtain like refugee status? Umm...if you...could you share more about it and...yea like the process-wise and how kind of your own family traveling from Thai to the United States?

PW: Okay, yea. So my...so when I was born in the...when I was born, I was...we had a...Okay, there's two waves when the United Nations basically...not two, there's probably multiple ways. The United Nations basically take the list of people in the refugees camp, and make them official...like what they become like an official refugees right, recognizing their official refugee status. So, that's when they take the...it's called the "family photo." Put them in the United UN refugee record. So, it happens once before I was born, before when my brother was very little. Yea, they took that picture once. And then, when I was born, I was like couple of months old. They took the picture one more again to renew the list because there are people who comes...there are some people who are left the refugees camps or there are people who came into the refugees camp recently. So, they just want to confirm the new the updated new list of how many many refugees are there. So, during that time, and then, another time at they went when i was maybe 4, 3, or 4 years old. They retake another photo to update the list, but during that time, my aunt was in Thailand. She went to the city to work. So, then she wasn't in the like



the new list of the refugees camp people that was confirmed. So, when we came to when we applied to the United States, since we are like...part of the list the official list they have, we are able to apply. But my aunt since she wasn't there, she miss that the day that they take and renew the list to take a picture of the renewed list. She's not qualified to apply to the United States. Or like actually during the 2007, 2006-2007, that's when the United Nation opened the list to Thailand refugees camp to go into different countries. And then my parents applied to the U.S. There are people who applied to Canada. There are some people who applied to Australia. So, there are options like or some EU countries. So, you have options to choose, and my parents choose the United States. And they applied 2006, but it was not until 2000...it was like the whole application for us took a around...two years...it was 2008 when we finally we made it in 2008, and that's when we came to the United States. But then for some people, it would only take them less than a year because it's case to case because when in my family, there's me, my family, and my two cousins. Because my two cousins' like families were not there with them, and they come as my parents being their guardians. So, there's like...there's more background checks and stuff they have to do. So, it takes longer. And then, for some people that have health problems and that of the issues, it also takes longer for them to pass the...pass the like the health interview because you can't come in if you have a I guess a sever sickness until you are being treated there. So, there are different cases where it slows down different applications. But for my cases, it was, yea...that my parents are also the guardians of my two cousins so that it takes them around two years for the applications to be accepted, and for us to be able to come to the United States and then, the state they pick for us. And the state they picked for us was Virginia. And that was when we moved there, the state has...only has three Karen families, including us. So...umm...actually before coming to the United States, so the whole process of applying to the United States, you submit your applications, and they will have four...like...interview to know your background and things like that. And then, after that, there will be a health interview, where you go and check your health, and and after that, there's another step where you have to give all the vaccines for all the things that you needed to be able to enter the country. And then after that there's an orientation. Once your thing...your your applications are accepted, there's an orientation they teach you how to like the culture in the United States, how is...how is different, what is like the culture appropriation i guess of the United States and things like that. They teach you like oh like because a lot of people doesn't know English so that when you are on the flights how do you like...you know like refugees traveling the first time, so they wouldn't teach you like how do you get to your designated country without getting lost things like that. The orientation and things like that. My parents like we came like they drove. I think they drove for a whole day from the refugee camp to Bangkok international airport. And at there we rode the plane from there to Japan, and Japan to Virginia. No, Japan to New York, and New York to Virginia. So, we took around three flights [laugh]. So, we don't really know the language. So, on my parents' bag, the bag is called IOM . I think it's called immigration of...International Organization of Migration. So, with that bag, I think people in the airline might be familiar that we are probably like refugees or immigrants that try to go to a different another country. And we

don't really know directions, so like we will...people will just guide us where we should go and we should show them our plane ticket. And...yea so, and then during the whole flight time, I think my entire family were like very super plane sick. We couldn't eat anything. My parents are worried that they would get lost, but for us, we are hungry but we are also super plane sick. So, my whole family got plane sick since it was our first time ride in a plane. So, umm...yea we couldn't eat anything. And the whole flight took around almost 20, 20 something hours from the Thailand to Virginia. So, it was a long flight. So, after that, yea, we came to... We arrived after many flights and many helps from different strangers that we saw help us through the bags that we were carrying. We get to Virginia, and that's where they assign one of the case worker. Yea, they call yea case worker to see like...find the house apartment for us. And all...the services we need. So, by the time when we get there, she pick us up there and take us to our apartment. And then I was actually pretty amazed by how nice like the building looks compared to the refugees camp, but at the same time, Virginia is nothing like what I have imagined the United States look like. [laugh] Like Hollywood movie I saw like either New York, tall buildings and things like that, and when I get to Virginia like, [laugh] the flat land. It's not the same, but I am still impressed by how nice the buildings are like. We live in a bamboo house and we are living like a nice i don't know the material they use yea like a nicer building.

YZ: Yea. You are like : "Oh, where are the tall buildings?! I don't see them" [Laugh].

PW: [laugh]

YZ: But yea. It was definitely like a really long flight. Like 20 hours?! But I am really happy for you guys cause you guys could eventually make it, and I am really impressed cause you guys are really like...I think it's really brave and really I don't know it takes a lot of courage and resilience to kind of come all along with families and stuff. And then I don't know language barrier and all that. But yea. You were talking about your aunt. And is...so...because she couldn't really make to the official list, so is she...do you know where she is right now? Or...

PW: Yea, yea. My aunt is still in Thailand. She's in the...not in refugee camp. Now, she's in the city with her daughter. And yea, she still couldn't...basically it ran out of the list for refugees from Thailand is closed now. So, if you want to come at this time, there's no...yea...you can't really come anymore. So, the list has been closed, but there's still my families stay connected with her through phone and stuff.

YZ: That's sweet. Kind of like another question. After all of these, would you be interested in learning more about for example like the history of Burma or maybe even going back or travel oneday?

PW: Right. Right. Yea. I mean I definitely want to go back if things get better. Right now, I don't know if you know this. The military coup taking all over the control of Burma right now. So, even for the Burmese citizenship citizen right now, they have a tough time. My family...I actually have never been to Burma. I was born in a Thailand refugee camp, and I lived there my whole life until we came to the United States. So, I don't know...I know my parents and families are from there like...yes. Some of my relatives are still there, but I actually don't even know what it looks like. I have never been there. So, I definitely want to go back one day to see the hometowns where my parents grew up and things like that. Also, experience the life...experience where my parents came from.

YZ: Yea, for sure. I think it would also be really interesting going back but as a visitor. What about like Thailand? Will that be a part of your maybe like somewhere that interests you?

PW: Yea. Yea. I wanna go back to Thailand for sure too. When I was little, I remember everything tasted so good like Thai food and stuff. I once came here, Thai food and stuff taste very different, so I do want to go back and also try some of the food there. But also go back to visit the refugees camp or where I came from my childhood home. I think that is where...my brother...my dad's brother live right now. And I want to go back to visit to see. Yea, how it looks back then versus now. And also still want to experience my childhood. Like go to the mountains and stuff to go and find my own vegetables. Experience the life of my childhood again basically. And yea, and when I was there, I've been telling my family that I want to go back, like especially this season to go eat. Durians and stuff [laugh]. But they told me that it's the raining seasons, so it's like I guess I can't go back right now. Yea...

YZ: Yea...also because of the COVID, a lot of travelings are kinda difficult right now, but it will definitely be really exciting and really interesting. And thai food, they are the best! I love them too. They taste really good! [laugh].

PW: [laugh].

YZ: Okay. I have a few more questions about you and also your position in the Karen Organization. So, what do you usually like...work like in the Karen Organization? Do you mainly work with youth or elders? Or both?

PW: Yea. So, I used to work with the youth before I work...I used to volunteer with the or I was a part of the first generation which is the Karen youth groups. Back then, I was participating there but also was a serving a leadership position back then as a first generation one of the leaders. And I help the youth to like with through first-generation there's a lot of different things. I think right now, there's like the California Karen Youth Form once a year. Where, you basically go and learn about Karen histories and different things like different updates on what's

going on in your country and things like that. I think that's able to connect with the rest of the Karen people in California. But from what I do right now is called tutoring assistant for Level Up programs. So, Level Up is a program for elementary school students, where the elementary school students are being able to come after school three times a week to be able to work on different art projects but also if they need any help on homework we help them there. And if they need help with...if they don't have any homework, then there's a teacher there teaches them different things like STEM combining. You know like engineering, math, science with arts. Yea, so, those are...that's what I am working on right now. I just go help with the assist with whatever they need help there or communicate with their parents when they are sending out updates regarding their kids or anything like that. So, in the program, I think it's to basically yea level up their skills like their kids'. I think for a lot of refugees parents like they are not able to give help on their kids' homework or the support that they need. So, the Level Up program fills up the gap and help them with whatever they need help with. They will be able to catch up with their peers but also have a diverse learning experience with STEM through STEM.

YZ: For sure. What you guys are doing is really awesome! It really helps...I think it would really help kids in terms of their homework and also like discovering their interests like that or just even kinda adjusting the new environment or like English as their new language. Could you share maybe some stories that either surprise you or like moves you or like shocks you or just like anything when you are working with people in this organization?

PW: I think working with people in this organization like for me, I say I am from the Karen community, we already know each other before working, but I think I guess working with them you also see...for me, like a lot of my peers I know them before working. I see other aspects of their lives and then when I came here working they become my co-workers. You see more like the professional sides of their work. And then I know that Karen organization provides service. But you working here you see the backgrounds of what they do and a lot of projects that they are doing. So, it's not just...I guess seeing a different perspective from people who receive services versus people who give services. So, I use...I guess working with them used to be the people I give service. I got to see the whole cycle: how this organization works. And I am really I guess grateful...I guess growing more grateful seeing how hard how many projects that they are that they keep on working on things like that yea. To make sure that the community is getting all the services in need.

YZ: Thank you for that! That was also a really unique perspective. We've talked a lot about your childhood and then what you are doing right now. I was just wondering what do you want to do in the future?

PW: Yea. So, I finished with the global health degree, but my goal is to go into Medical school. So, right now, I am taking...planning to take a gap year. To be the 2023-2024 cycle. I will apply

to Medical school. I am currently also trying to study for MCAT as well. So, my goal is to become a pediatrician. So, we'll see where I goes. We'll see if next year or so, if I still want to if I still have that passion or my passion is still strong. And if so, I will yea, apply to Medical school, and see we'll see what I get from there. I am also open to any opportunities that are...like I am not closing myself to one opportunity. I am also open to wherever at least I am being leading to.

YZ: You got this. You got this! For the test, I know it's gonna be kinda stressful but I know you will do really good. Kind of another question. This might be a little bit far from now, but just hypothetically, if you are going to have kids in the future or anything, would you want to tell your kids about your experience kinda like growing up in a refugee camp or your parents' experience? Would that be something that you want to do or tell them?

PW: Yea. I mean my future goal is to have kids too. I do wanna maybe I guess we grow up in this generation where you see a lot of kids just like more focused on the screen. The childhood life when we used to go outside like that. If I do have kids, I do want them to know like basically yea, not make them stare at screen all day. Have them..teach them the experiences that I had as a kid. You know like the games that I played I grew up playing. Also teach them like activity like how to be grateful but also use everything they have to be able to make something that they wanted instead of basically yea...like how can you use recycle materials to make your own toys and that. To grow up as a creative person but also innovative. And thinking about also being grateful. Be a grateful person. And to do things that's important for people. To have a lot of gratitude, and I do want that to be something that I teach my future generation to be...able to become the person that's grateful for every single thing knowing that what the generation before them had to do to overcome the challenges like what my grandparents and my parents overcome and got through those challenges and get where they are, a better society and a better country. So, they should be grateful for those and not take anything for granted.

YZ: Yea, for sure. I feel like these are definitely some really important lessons that...or really great lessons for little kids to know. And also, making out of things...making things out of recycle stuff, like personally myself, I am interested in that. I think it would be really fun and meaningful and really educational. Yea...

PW: Yea...This is what we do what we actually do in the LEVEL UP program too. They are like making arts out of recycled materials as well.

YZ: Wow. Can I go oneday?

PW: Yayy. Feel free. You can come visit. And in the future, I don't know if your college will requires like an interdisciplinary course or whatever, but a lot of people take EDS, a lot of

students we have come to volunteer from UCSD pal program. Yea, that's like an open opportunity in the future. You can also just come volunteer if you want to. Come check it out to see it before!

YZ: Thanks for letting me know that! I am totally down! I will check it out later. But yea, I think this would be the end of our interview today. Do you have any questions or anything else that you want to share or talk about?

PW: No. I think that's all. I am just...Yea. Thank you for interviewing! I'm sorry if I didn't answer your questions directly. I was just like talking in a circle and repetitive in a lot of things.

YZ: No, no. For me, I am really thankful for you sharing all your experiences, stories, and then like your feelings and all that. I really appreciate that, and thank you so much for taking the time to meet with me and doing all this!

PW: Yea, thank you! I am glad that works able to work together and the oral history project with the Karen organization to preserve our history.

YZ: Yea, I think it will be really cool! I think that would be all for today. Thank you so so so much! If you have any questions or anything else in the future, just let me know. Like I said before interview, I will also email you the video, the audio, and also the transcription later when I am done with them.

PW: And i will work on the consent form and send it back to you and also my photo.

YZ: Okay. Sounds good!

PW: Have a good day!

YZ: Bye. You too! It was nice talking to you!

PW: Good luck with your midterms and finals!

YZ: Thank you so much! Bye!

